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RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1976
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 5453
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 9047
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 6623
RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 2167
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2429
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 000300

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/MLS, DRL, AND IO
PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/21/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [BM](#)
SUBJECT: BURMA: AUNG SAN SUU KYI MEETS WITH RANGOON
DIPLOMATS

REF: A. RANGOON 295
[1](#)B. BANGKOK 1219

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Classified By: DCM Tom Vajda for Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) Rangoon-based diplomats from Singapore, Thailand, and Russia -- representing the dean of the diplomatic corps, ASEAN chair, and UNSC president, respectively -- met May 20 for nearly 30 minutes with Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK) in the Insein prison guest house where she is being held. This is believed to be the first meeting ASSK has held with foreign diplomats (other than UN envoys) since 2003. ASSK reported she is healthy and has been treated well by authorities, and stressed she is innocent of the charges brought against her in connection with the incursion into her home of American citizen John Yettaw. She emphasized her continued commitment to national reconciliation and expressed hope that "something good" could come out of the incident. End summary.

Meeting Takes Place at Insein Guest House

[1](#)2. (C) Singapore Ambassador Robert Chua, Thailand Acting DCM Somjai Taphaopong, and a Russian second secretary met May 20 with Aung San Suu Kyi following the conclusion of the day's court proceedings against her, her two aides, and American John Yettaw (Ref A). Chua briefed the diplomatic corps later that evening. He reported the session with ASSK took place in the living room of the guest house on the Insein prison compound in which ASSK and her two attendants are being held. Chua described it as a nice, comfortably furnished two-story residence. The Deputy Director General for Protocol and the Insein prison director sat in on the meeting but did not intervene. Although MOFA had informed diplomats earlier in the day that the meeting would last 10 minutes, it ran close to half an hour. Chua said the GOB reps made no effort to cut short the meeting and allowed it to run its course.

¶3. (C) Chua said ASSK reported that she and her two aides were healthy and had been treated well by Burmese authorities. She is under the care of three physicians -- two specialists and one prison doctor -- who were in attendance at the meeting. Asked what message she wanted to convey to the diplomatic community, ASSK said she appreciated the diplomats' visit and concern and wanted to stress that she was innocent of the charges authorities had brought against her.

¶4. (C) According to Chua, ASSK stated repeatedly that she had not invited American citizen John Yettaw to her home. She said she never denied his visit to police, nor did she deny that she had allowed him to "stay for awhile." She added that when Yettaw visited her house in November 2008 she asked her doctor to report the incident to the police. Regarding the more recent visit, ASSK said that Yettaw arrived early in the morning and that she had asked him to leave. However, he claimed to be unwell and asked to remain in the house, which she permitted. In the evening, he again claimed he was unwell so she allowed him to stay the night.

¶5. (C) ASSK told the diplomats on several occasions that she did not report Yettaw to the police because of her "political principles." She explained that members of her party, staff, and other citizens had been detained by authorities with no legal recourse, and she did not want Yettaw to suffer the same fate. She said Yettaw had committed an "irresponsible act" by intruding on her compound, adding that based on her conversations with him, she believed Yettaw needed a psychiatric examination.

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¶6. (C) ASSK stressed that she believed in national reconciliation, Chua reported. She said every event could be an opportunity for national reconciliation "if all parties so wished." For her part, she did not intend to use Yettaw's intrusion to "get at" Burmese authorities, and noted that it was not too late for something positive to come out of this unfortunate incident. ASSK concluded her remarks by asking Chua to convey her best wishes to ASEAN and other members of the diplomatic corps.

ASSK Does Most of the Talking

¶7. (C) Chua guided the discussion with ASSK and said he led with questions about her health, since that was a topic on which all countries could agree. (Note: Charge had passed Chua suggested topics to raise, but Chua said he considered it "inappropriate" to accept others' questions. End Note.) The Thai Acting DCM Somjai Taphaopong, whose Ambassador was in Nay Pyi Taw, conveyed a private message from Thai Foreign Minister Kasit and read the ASEAN chair statement that Thailand issued May 18 (Ref B). Somjai declined at the meeting with the dip corps to provide details on Kasit's message. The Russian second secretary -- dispatched to attend the court session and ASSK meeting despite his Ambassador's presence in Yangon -- offered best wishes on ASSK's health, but had nothing more to say. Beyond that, ASSK did most of the talking at the meeting, forcefully refuting the charges she now faces but also underscoring her willingness to work toward national reconciliation with the very same regime that seems intent on extending her detention. Chua reported that ASSK was comfortable and at-ease throughout the discussion, smiling and making jokes at times and not at all affected by the presence of the warden and MOFA official.

DINGER